



INTERACTIVE DIGITAL CENTER

Bridging the skills gap through virtual reality: Innovative virtual reality solutions strengthen vocational programs, education, and industry.

Analyses undertaken by the African Economic Outlook point out that in many middle-income countries, high job vacancy rates prevail despite large scale unemployment, suggesting that the skills gap also drives youth unemployment in countries like Morocco.

Morocco has recently embarked on an ambitious strategy to reform vocational training throughout the country to boost youth employment. New and emerging technologies must be integrated within curricula to provide critical skills development, ensuring youth and entrepreneurs gain the credentials they need to compete in the modern workforce.

USAID RESPONSE

Solving structural and youth unemployment requires innovative and diverse solutions. USAID seeks to increase employability by providing cutting-edge, affordable learning solutions for skills development to help reduce youth unemployment, promote entrepreneurship, and potentially increase industrial productivity.

Through a public-private partnership, the Interactive Digital Center (IDC) is designed to train the new generation of experts in the emerging field of augmented and virtual reality (AVR) and provide technology-forward solutions for various vocational skills and professions, education providers, and industrial companies. This approach also provides a foundational model for the Government of Morocco as it pursues its objectives for a modern labor market.

The Interactive Digital Center provides access to AVR technologies, including a virtual showroom, a development lab, and a research and development hub for products and applications. The IDC

builds professionals' ability to use AVR technology in their daily work, thus preparing them for the jobs of the future. Furthermore, the center will become a pillar of the future of education in Morocco, as it will train professors and trainers on AVR usage to create innovative lessons, thereby offering students advanced learning solutions that respond to the labor market demand.

RESULTS TO DATE

- Established a fully functional Interactive Digital Center in Ben Guerir with state-of-the-art equipment and AVR technology.
- Developed and adapted to the restrictive pandemic environment a six-month training course for a Virtual Reality and Innovation Academy (VRIA), to train the next generation of Moroccan AVR experts.
- Trained two intakes with 55 young Moroccans in the VRIA. The students of the third intake started their training in April 2021.
- The center reinforced the educational outcomes of 234 professionals in sectors such as automotive engineering, aeronautics, Office for Vocational Training and Job Promotion (OFPPT), and others thanks to "smart worker" workshops.
- The center has also trained more than 116 professors from several universities and training centers on AVR technology to create or upgrade innovative lessons.
- The IDC initiated collaborations with several potential partners, such as OFPPT, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

FACTS & FIGURES

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- EON Reality
- Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)
- The Agency of Digital Development (ADD)
- Mohammed V University in Rabat

HOST-COUNTRY PARTNERS:

- The Moroccan Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research
- The Moroccan Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy

BUDGET: \$3 million (USAID's contribution to a \$28,951,500 total partnership budget)

LOCATION: Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Ben Guerir, Marrakesh-Safi region

DURATION: 2019-2024

KEY CONTACT:

Salma Kadiri
Project Management Specialist
skadiri@usaid.gov